

**EXETER-WEST GREENWICH May 24, 2011**

**REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**

## **MINUTES**

**The Exeter-West Greenwich Regional School District School Committee held a meeting on this date at 6:00 p.m. in the Exeter-West Greenwich Jr. – Sr. High School library. Members present were Gregory Coutcher, Chairperson; Teri Maia-Cicero, Vice Chairperson, (arrived at 6:07 p.m.); Valerie Zuercher, Clerk; Mark Rafanelli; Theresa Donovan; Paul McFadden; and Claudine Pande. Superintendent Thomas J. Geismar, Director of Administration Robert V. Ross, Director of Special Services Carmella Farrar, and Student Member Matthew French were present.**

**ORDER – Chair Coutcher called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all and Clerk Zuercher read the District Mission Statement.**

**Open Forum – None**

**Recognitions/Achievements – Teachers At Sea – Erica Killian – Dr. Geismar recognized high school math teacher Erica Killian for being selected for the Rhode Island Teacher-at-Sea, (RITAS) Program. The University of Rhode Island Graduate School of Oceanography selects teachers for the RITAS Program. Teachers selected became part of a**

**scientific research team conducting ocean science research aboard the R/V Endeavor. Ms. Killian gave a brief account of her one-week science expedition at sea. She said it was a great opportunity and a positive experience that she has been able to share with her students, colleagues, and the math department.**

**National Endowment for the Humanities Winner – Sharon Sutton – Dr. Geismar recognized and congratulated high school English teacher Sharon Sutton for being accepted into the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) summer institute to study Emily Dickinson at Amherst College this July. Ms. Sutton was one of twenty selected from a vast pool of applicants. Ms. Sutton gave an overview of the NEH program and said that she is very excited and feels as though she has won the lottery! She realizes how fortunate she is to have been chosen. She recommended advertising the NEH opportunity to the EWG faculty because very few people are aware that the program exists. Dr. Geismar suggested having Ms. Sutton back in the fall to share her experience.**

**Presentation – Student Member Report – Student Member Matthew French reported that the prom went well without incident.**

**Local Advisory Committee Update – Mary Beth Cournoyer gave the Local Advisory Committee (LAC) on Special Education annual report of activities. She recognized Director of Special Education Carmella Farrar for her outstanding work and continued support of the LAC.**

**Ms. Cournoyer presented the LAC By-Laws for School Committee approval and signatures, which is required to allow the LAC to continue. Each member**

**EXETER-WEST GREENWICH May 24, 2011**

**REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT Page 2**

**signed to approve the By-Laws of the EWG, RI Local Advisory Committee on Special Education.**

**Special Education Presentation – Dr. Geismar recognized special education staff members Denise Fournier, Alan Ezovski, and Robin Corsi in attendance to assist in the Special Education Presentation. Director of Special Education Carmella Farrar presented a PowerPoint illustrating general information regarding the 2010 – 2011 academic year. The presentation included Special Education Enrollment, Disabilities Percentages, Group Home Status, Consolidated Resource Plan (CRP) Expenditures, Pre-School Budget, AARA Funds Expenditures, Extended School Year Programs, and Parent Survey Indicator 8 information. Mrs. Corsi gave a detailed report regarding Early Intervention and the Child Outreach Program, which she coordinates. Special education elementary teacher Denise Fournier reported on the results to improve inclusive service delivery within the district and she shared visual evidence of how modifications take place in co-taught classrooms.**

**Student Member French left the meeting at this time, (6:58 p.m.).**

**School Social Worker Alan Ezovski reported on the Family Services Partnership Program, which he said has been very successful.**

**Student Member French returned to the meeting at this time, (7:03 p.m.).**

**Dr. Geismar acknowledged the excellent work that Mr. Ezovski and School Psychologist Liz Lurgio do with EWG students and said that the Family Services Program is over and above what they do. Ms. Farrar agreed and also acknowledged the excellent work of School Psychologist Kristen Marx and School Social Worker Steve Greenberg. She said that Family Services gives the District just another level of support, which is an invaluable component.**

**In closing, Mrs. Farrar reported on the Lineham Playground Project that Alternative Learning Program (ALP) students hope to accomplish by the end of the school year. She said it has been a challenge, the ALP staff works hard, and moving forward there will be a change to ALP student and parent accountability.**

**ROUTINE ITEMS – CONSENT AGENDA- Superintendent Geismar gave an overview of the Consent Agenda. Dr. Geismar answered Member Donovan's clarifying questions regarding the Recall List.**

**Member Pande made a motion to accept the consent agenda.**

**Member Donovan seconded the motion. Voted 7 – 0 in favor.**

**EXETER-WEST GREENWICH May 24, 2011**

**REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT Page 3**

**The following items were approved:**

**A. Approval of Minutes – Regular Minutes of May 10, 2011; Executive Session Minutes of May 10, 2011**

**B. Personnel Items**

**1. Appointments**

**2. Leaves of Absence**

**3. Resignations – (As Recommended by the Superintendent, with Regret)**

**a. Letter of Resignation from Perry Miller resigning his position as 1.0 FTE One-on-One Special Education Teacher Assistant at Wawaloam School, effective June 24, 2011**

**4. Grievances**

**5. Non-Renewals**

**6. Recalls – (As Recommended by the Superintendent)**

**a. Please see attached REVISED Initial (Certified) List**

**7. Sabbaticals**

**C. Bills – In the amount of \$158,434.46**

**D. Home School Approvals**

**End Consent Agenda**

**Correspondence – (1) cc: May 11, 2011 Letter to Dr. Roy Seitsinger from Superintendent Geismar Rescinding EWG's Letter of Withdrawal from SORICO;**

**(2) May 10, 2011 RESOLUTION (Contract Continuation) of the Portsmouth School Committee; (3) April 28, 2011 RESOLUTIONS (Binding Arbitration)(Contract Continuation) of the Cumberland School Committee**

**NEW BUSINESS – New High School Graduation Requirements Update – Principal Brian Butler reported on the new graduation requirements Title L – Secondary Design – Chapter 6. He said that letters explaining the new requirements were mailed in May to families and students at various grade levels. Next, he gave an overview of the requirements for an Exeter-West Greenwich diploma, which exceed the state requirements. In response to Member Pande's inquiry, Principal Butler explained the importance of offering the .5 credit Senior Research Paper course to students next year.**

**Dr. Geismar and Member Rafanelli acknowledged the positive outcome of Sr. Project Day.**

**Approve .5 FTE Sr. Project Coordinator for 2011 – 2012 – Dr. Geismar requested the School Committee approve a .66 Senior Project Coordinator to support all students in meeting the proficiency based graduation requirements. This will require an additional .16 FTE to come from budgeted funds. There is an approved job description in**

place for the position.

**EXETER-WEST GREENWICH    May 24, 2011**

**REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT    Page 4**

Principal Butler requested to add a change to refer to the position as a Proficiency Based Graduation Requirements Coordinator, which would be more appropriate. He stated that the position is needed due to all the changes taking place, which will consequently require exhausting amounts of time to manage. Additionally, the new evaluation system that must be done every year will be overwhelming. Those two variables make it next to impossible to manage and this would be the only way to get it done effectively. Principal Butler stated that the current Sr. Project Coordinator job description is appropriate for the work that the Proficiency Based Graduation Requirements Coordinator will do. Clerk Zuercher questioned if a different job label would create internal issues and appear as a new position. Principal Butler said he did not think so. In response to Member Pande's inquiry, Dr. Geismar stated that .5FTE of this position is in the budget. However, .16FTE is not. Member Pande stated that she would like to see more details about the Proficiency Based Graduation Requirements Coordinator position before the committee. She does not have enough before her to make a decision and is not comfortable voting tonight. Dr. Geismar stated that a job description for a Proficiency Based Graduation Requirements Coordinator could be brought to the next meeting for

**discussion/consideration. Member Donovan agreed with Member Pande and said she supports the request; however, there needs to be a well-documented job description in place first so there are no misunderstandings. This item and job description will continue to the next regular meeting agenda.**

**Discussion of Grade 1/2 Split Class at Wawaloam – Dr. Geismar and Principal Melissa Marino informed the School Committee of the new grade one/two split classroom that will be put in place at Wawaloam next school year. By doing this, the district builds in a cushion for class size and it allows model students to excel academically while supporting those students with specific skill gaps or those who have demonstrated borderline skill levels with their readiness for the next grade level. Principal Marino answered members' clarifying questions and concerns. Member Pande voiced her opinion that the district should be proactive and inform parents of how students are chosen for the split class.**

**GASB-54 Changes – Director of Administration Robert Ross pointed out the GASB 54 document enclosed in members' packets that clearly defines fund balance reporting for dealing with governmental funds. Mr. Ross stated that the next agenda item falls under GASB 54 balance classification "Assigned".**

**Approve Assignment of General Fund Balance for 2011 – 2012 Balance – Mr. Ross stated he anticipates a general fund balance in**



excess of \$929,944. He requested the School Committee formally act to approve the assignment of up to \$928,944 of the general fund balance to cover anticipated shortfalls in the areas of transportation and tuitions. These were the cuts made to balance revenue and expenses.

**EXETER-WEST GREENWICH    May 24, 2011**

**REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT    Page 5**

Member Pande moved to assign \$928,944 to cover transportation and tuitions. Member Rafanelli seconded.

In response to Clerk Zuercher's request, Dr. Geismar said he would research the District's responsibility for continuing to pay tuition to the Greene School for a failing student.

Mr. Ross took note of Member Donovan's observation of discrepancies between Green School and Coventry Tuition figures listed in Dr. Geismar's April 19 Memorandum and Mr. Ross' May 24, 2011 Memorandum. Chair Coutcher pointed out that the bottom-line of \$928,944 is still the same and that is the amount in the motion. Member Donovan asked if the auditor recommended the fund balance at a certain threshold and anything above that to be assigned. Mr. Ross stated that the discussion with the auditor was around the recognition that cuts had to be made to balance the budget and as a

result of those cuts there is going to be an anticipated shortfall in specific areas of the budget. Assigning funds from the general fund balance will help to ensure the District does not overspend the general fund balance on other items as we operate next year. The auditor made this recommendation and this gives assurance publically and serves to remind the School Committee that this money will deal with any of the anticipated shortfalls.

Chair Coutcher called for a vote on Member Pande's motion to assign \$928,944 to cover transportation and tuitions; seconded by Member Rafanelli.

Voted 7 – 0 in favor. The motion passed.

Approve New Tile Flooring – Wawaloam School – At the May 10 School Committee meeting, Dr. Geismar informed the committee of an emergency situation to remove damaged carpeting and replace it with tile floor in two classrooms at Wawaloam School. The work has been scheduled to be done this week. Dr. Geismar asked the School Committee to formally approve carpet removal and tile floor replacement at Wawaloam School.

Clerk Zuercher moved to approve new tile flooring at Wawaloam School; seconded by Vice Chair Cicero.

Member Pande requested to add the procurement of two area rugs for

students to sit on. Mr. Ross stated that he is confident this item may be eligible for housing aid reimbursement. If it is not, funding can come out of the Capital Project Reserve Fund.

Clerk Zuercher amended her original motion.

**EXETER-WEST GREENWICH May 24, 2011**

**REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT Page 6**

Clerk Zuercher moved to approve the flooring at Wawaloam School and amend it to include two area rugs for the children to sit on; seconded by Vice Chair Cicero; and voted 7 – 0 in favor. The motion passed.

**Approve Workers' Compensation Insurance Bid Award – Mr. Ross put forth his recommendation that the School Committee award the Workers' Compensation Insurance bid to Beacon Mutual Insurance Company.**

Clerk Zuercher moved to approve the Workers' Compensation Insurance bid award to Beacon Mutual; seconded by Member Pande; and voted 7 – 0 in favor. The motion passed.

**Approve Telephone Repair/Replacement – Mr. Ross reported that the**

telephone system at the Jr./Sr. High School suffered a lightning strike back on June 5, 2010. The current vendor, Professional Communications (PC) performed emergency repairs to restore service at that time. Currently the telephone system is on the fritz and needs to be replaced and upgraded. Technology has changed with analog phones being replaced by Voice Over IP digital systems. Mr. Ross recommended the School Committee approve funding this telephone system replacement/upgrade and to proceed with the quote from Professional Communications.

Member McFadden briefly explained how a Voice Over IP telephone systems works and said the system could sometimes cause issues and over time performance may change. He requested to make certain that the contract with PC includes a six-month period of performance clause that if the District is unsatisfied, the system would be taken out and a different system would be installed.

Member McFadden made a motion that the contract you sign with Professional Communications has a stipulation that there is a period of performance of six-months and if you are not satisfied with the purchase that you can get your money back; seconded by Clerk Zuercher; voted 7 – 0 in favor. The motion passed.

**Approve Food Service Renewal/Price Increase –** Mr. Ross asked the School Committee to consider increasing the cost of elementary school lunches from \$2.00 to \$2.10 and for secondary lunches from

**\$2.25 to \$2.35 representing a 10-cent increase to each. The District is entering into the third year of a five-year contract with Sodexo Food Service. Mr. Ross advised that one thing EWG must do is invest in the serving lines at the junior-senior high and the serving wells at Metcalf. The 10-cent increase is in line with neighboring districts and may be the adjustment needed for the investments that need to be made. Four years ago, the District was upside down in its food service fund balance. Sodexo and the District have worked very hard to control food service expenses and return the program to balance. However, what has suffered is some of the capital investment in the kitchens. The District owns all of the equipment in the kitchens.**

**EXETER-WEST GREENWICH May 24, 2011**

**REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT Page 7**

**budget presented by Sodexo shows an anticipated \$9,228.19 profit for 2011-2012. This is based on a certain level of student participation in the school lunch program. The lunch program is a self-sustained program that should not cost the district anything and should be operated with a zero or slightly above zero balance. Mr. Ross stated that based on Sodexo's projection, he is anticipating that the District will end with a net of approximately \$10,000 at the end of 2011. A previous quote showed that the replacement cost for the eight-line stainless steel unit with heaters that is needed at the Metcalf School would be approximately \$18,000. The improvements or replacements could be made using the Capital Reserve Fund and the Food Service Fund balances. The Capital Reserve Fund will have approximately**

**\$160,000 ending June 30, 2011 to use for projects next year. Mr. Ross said he would prioritize items that the District needs to address and bring that to the School Committee before July 15.**

**Student Member French left the meeting at this time, (8:35 p.m.).**

**Vice Chair Cicero pointed out that there is talk about eliminating State Housing Aid Reimbursement. Mr. Ross said he is aware of that. Member Pande said she would like to see any price increase profits invested in kitchen improvements.**

**Student Member French returned to the meeting at this time, (8:42 p.m.).**

**Student Member French gave his opinion that the food service at the senior high is good and the food is good. A 10-cent price increase is not unreasonable.**

**Clerk Zuercher moved to increase the food service price based on the money coming back into the capital project to improve the facility, and renewal of the contract; seconded by Member Donovan; and voted 7 – 0 in favor. The motion passed.**

**Approve Alarm Service Contract – 1-Year Extension – Member Pande moved to approve the Alarm Service Contract – 1-Year Extension; seconded by Vice Chair Cicero; and voted 7 – 0 in favor. The motion**

**passed.**

**Retirement Incentives – Dr. Geismar reported that the District Treasurer researched the status of each employee in relation to their eligibility to retire and when. The number of employees that could be eligible to retire is going to increase in the next couple of years. Dr. Geismar recommended this topic as a point of discussion during negotiations. He said the work has been done and the results can be reviewed with the attorney to determine what course of action to take to incent people to retire.**

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS – Capital Project Update – Dr. Geismar reported there are two standing Capital Project items at this time. First is the water system at Metcalf School, which is funded out of the district capital fund separate from the bond issue. The contractor that will do the work met with the Capital Project Building Committee and the**

**EXETER-WEST GREENWICH May 24, 2011**

**REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT Page 8**

**work will begin on June 27. There will be no summer programs at Metcalf this year. The contractor estimates the work to be completed by the third week in July. (July 15 – July 30 weather permitting.) The second item is the security system, which is part of the bond. Approximately \$30,000 has been allocated to fund that project. However, the bid is at \$168,000 so there is a discrepancy. The**

**Building Committee requested the District's electrician of record to look at the project and submit an estimate. This is still pending. The Building Committee will not meet tomorrow night. The next meeting is scheduled for June 1. Member Rafanelli pointed out that June 1 is the Fine Arts Banquet, which conflicts with the Building Committee meeting date.**

**Reports/Comments – Member Donovan acknowledged that tonight is Student Member French's last meeting before Graduation and expressed appreciation for his service to the School Committee. Matthew thanked the School Committee for the opportunity.**

**Dr. Geismar asked Matthew if he could come to the June 15 meeting and Matthew agreed to do so.**

**Important Dates and Meetings – Wednesday, May 25, 2011 – Capital Project Building Committee Meeting ; Thursday, June 2, 2011 Honors Night @ 6:30PM; Saturday, June 11, 2011 – Graduation (Ryan Ctr. @4PM); Wednesday, June 15, 2011 – School Committee Meeting-(Jr. High Presentation); Wednesday, June 22, 2011 – Jr. High Moving Up Ceremony @ 6PM; Tuesday, June 28, 2011 – School Committee Meeting-(Facilities Presentation)**

**EXECUTIVE SESSION – RIGL 42-46-4 and RIGL 42-46-5 – None**

**Adjournment – Vice Chair Cicero moved to adjourn; seconded by Member Rafanelli; and voted 7 – 0 in favor. Meeting adjourned at 8:53**



**p.m.**

**ROBIN CERIO  
CLERK**